is paying a fee. If we assume that this occurs, and that the fee requirement alone constitutes discrimination, what is the ILEC to do? Voluntarily exit the building and leave the market to the CLEC? This would never happen.

So self-policing cannot work – the Commission would have to make these determinations. Presumably, the Commission could allow the CLEC to bring a complaint against the ILEC, review the facts and determine whether there was "discrimination." There are too many problems with this approach to list them all. First, it seems strange to us that this could be done without involving the building owner, who might have something to say about the reasons for differences in the terms of access and who has the right to due process. But the Commission has no power over the building owner and cannot compel the building owner to cooperate. Second, how does it advance the Commission's goals to direct one or both carriers to cut off service to the building? Third, if the Commission orders one carrier not to comply with the terms of its agreement – presumably the CLEC, perhaps by not paying the access fee – what is to prevent the building owner from seeking to enforce the contract in court, or resorting to some contractual remedy, such as removing the CLEC's equipment? Fourth, what if the ILEC has no written agreement, but claims the right to remain on the property under state law, whether by right of condemnation, under a prescriptive easement, or some other mechanism? Does that mean the CLEC gets exactly the same rights?

Finally, the Commission's track record is not encouraging. The closest example to the proposed regulation of building access in recent years has been the adjudication of cable rate regulation disputes. Cable regulation disputes are similar to the type of fact-specific inquiries the Commission would have to undertake to enforce the "nondiscriminating" access proposals. To determine whether building access is being granted on a non-discriminatory basis, the

Commission would have to examine evidence on a case-by-case basis. Such evidence may include individual contract terms and comparison of comparable contracts with similar buildings. In many cases, there are no written agreements outlining terms with existing providers.

The Cable Services Bureau was specifically empowered to resolve cable rate regulation complaints, and this mission was reflected in its staffing, but the process has proven glacially slow. In 2000, for example, the Cable Services Bureau resolved 36 cable rate regulation disputes. The average age of a cable rate case resolved in 2000 was over 63 months. ⁹⁶ If it takes the Commission more than five years to resolve cable rates disputes — a matter clearly within the Commission's jurisdiction and expertise, how will it handle building access complaints in anything like a reasonable time? Especially when neither the Wireless Bureau nor the Common Carrier Bureau has been assigned additional staff to resolve mandatory access complaints.

And how would such a process speed up building access negotiations? The only way the Commission could improve on the pace of free market processes would be if it made summary decisions in favor of providers - and thereby violate the rights of property owners. Not only is such a prospect immensely troubling in itself, but it would completely contravene the intent of the 1996 Act. The Alliance has voluntarily adopted Best Practices Guidelines, which will help tenants obtain access to competitive service providers in a timely fashion. The Commission must reject attempts to contravene market solutions by imposing the type of stifling regulation that the 1996 Act was designed to eliminate.

⁹⁶ See Exhibit I for a list of cable rate decisions issued in 2000. Seven orders did not specify the date of the original complaint. This average is based on the 29 complaints where starting date information was available.

We could go on, but the fact is that the complexities and ramifications of applying the proposed sanction are so many, and so apparent on even a cursory examination, that it is clear that this is not a path Commission will want to pursue for long.

III. A REQUIREMENT THAT CARRIERS PAY BUILDING OWNERS JUST COMPENSATION DOES NOT SATISFY THE FIFTH AMENDMENT.

The Cooper Carvin Analysis also demonstrates that the Commission cannot avoid the Takings Clause by simply directing carriers to pay building owners for access. ⁹⁷ The Commission has no authority – express or implied — to take the property of building owners in the first place, so the compensation issue never even arises. We discussed this issue at length in our earlier comments, as well as in the constitutional analysis attached to those comments.

In addition, in *Bell Atlantic Tel. Cos. v. FCC*, 24 F.3d 1441 (D.C. Cir. 1994), the court invalidated the Commission's collocation rules even though the Commission had allowed ILECs to recover the costs of permitting collocation through tariffs. In other words, the FCC has already tried the approach proposed in the FNPRM to circumvent the Constitution, and lost. It is not enough for the Commission to simply require carriers to pay, because there may be residual liability if the amount provided for is inadequate.⁹⁸

A related flaw is that the FNPRM does not provide a formula for determining compensation. The Commission would have to develop such a formula because otherwise there would be no assurance that the rate payable under a particular agreement would meet the constitutional test for "just compensation."

⁹⁷ Cooper Carvin Analysis at 14-22.

⁹⁸ Cooper Carvin Analysis at 17.

⁹⁹ *Id.* at 20-22.

Finally, the existence of the Tucker Act does not permit the Commission to ignore its constitutional obligation. If the FCC's compensation scheme proved inadequate, the government would still be liable, which is exactly why the FCC cannot effect a taking without authority.

Otherwise, government agencies would be free to take property at will, leaving it to the courts to determine compensation, and to Congress to find the money after the fact. That is why the FNPRM's scheme violates the Fifth Amendment. 100

IV. THE COMMISSION MUST NOT ATTEMPT TO FURTHER EXPAND THE MEANING OF THE TERM "RIGHT-OF-WAY."

A. The FCC's Interpretation of Section 224 is Already Erroneous and the FCC Should Not Compound the Error.

As we discussed in our original comments, and will address in our Petition for Reconsideration, the Commission has already misinterpreted the language and purpose of Section 224 in two ways. First, Section 224 was never intended to apply to facilities inside buildings; and second, there is no such thing as a "right-of-way" inside a building. The FNPRM now proposes to compound the error by interpreting a "right-of-way" as granting a right to install facilities anywhere in a building, regardless of where existing facilities happen to be located. FNPRM at ¶ 170.

The term "right-of-way" has two related meanings: it refers either to the right to pass over land without interference, or to the associated strip of land used for that purpose. ¹⁰¹ There are no rights-of-way inside buildings, under either definition. The term does not apply to any right to enter a building, because the right to enter a building is always subject to interference: a

¹⁰⁰ *Id.* at 19-20.

building owner may close and lock the building; may limit after-hours entry to its employees or tenants; may limit entry by service personnel to certain hours or conditions, such as by requiring that they be escorted; and so on. Because there is no right of unimpeded access inside a building, there is no right of passage that conforms to the definition of a "right-of-way." Furthermore, there can be no physical strip of property associated with a right of passage that does not exist.

In this regard, we note that we have identified no case, treatise, or other source that refers to "rights-of-way" inside buildings, nor does the FNPRM cite any such authority.

In any case, even if rights-of-way did exist inside buildings, rights of-way would not be unbounded rights of access. The FNPRM is properly concerned about that question and the Commission should heed its own words at footnote 206, where it stated that "a broadly worded easement" would not, in itself, create a right-of-way. The holder of a right-of-way may only use the right to pass from one point to another. The cases routinely refer to rights-of-way in the secondary sense of associated land as "strips" of land. Common sense dictates that this is true. Railroads have the right to cross property only in a linear fashion. The right to install track does not include the right to install a station or depot. The same is true in the utility context. An easement to cross farmland with electrical transmission lines does not carry with it the right to go anywhere on the property. And the right under Section 224 to use poles located in an easement does not permit a telecommunications provider to install its facilities in the servient estate outside the easement.

¹⁰¹ See Reilly, The Language of Real Estate (2d ed. 1982) at 418; Kalinowski v. Jacobowski, 100 P. 852 (Wash. 1909) ("right-of-way" is the right "to travel over a particular tract of land without interference"); 65 Am. Jur. 2d, Railroads § 50.

¹⁰² "A grant or reservation of a right to pass on a private way to one lot does not confer the right to pass further on the same way to another lot. Similarly, a right of way appurtenant to a

Furthermore, the purpose of Section 224 is to allow telecommunications providers and cable companies to take advantage of the existing facilities of *utilities*. The proposed interpretation would allow them to take advantage of the facilities of *building owners*. This violates not only the statute, but the Fifth Amendment.

The Commission therefore cannot expand the rights of existing telecommunications providers to allow competitors to go anywhere in a building. Neither Section 224 nor the concept of a right-of-way permit it.

Similarly, there are no circumstances in which a utility may "own or control" a right-of-way in the absence of a defined space. The concept of a right-of-way *demands* a defined space. For one thing, any other interpretation could result in a claim that a utility "controlled" the entire interior space of a building. This is simply illogical, and indicative of the morass into which the Commission would get itself into by trying to address this topic.

B. Any Expansion of the Term "Right-of-Way" Would Raise the Prospect of a Taking.

The FNPRM's proposal would unquestionably result in a taking. The Commission cannot grant a telecommunications provider any property right in a building that the building owner has not already granted to an incumbent utility. If the building owner has not transferred a property right to a utility, then the owner has retained that right and the Commission cannot effect a transfer of that right to a telecommunications provider without taking the building owner's property. *Gulf Power Co. v. United States*, 187 F.3d 1324 (11th Cir. 1999), *reh'g, en banc, denied,* 226 F.3d 1220 (11th Cir. 2000). This is especially true because exercising such a

particular lot cannot be used as a mode of access to another lot to which it is not appurtenant." 25 Am. Jur. 2d, Easements & Licenses, § 86 (1996).

right would involve the permanent physical occupation of the property, as was the case in *Loretto*.

This illustrates the fundamental practical problem with the Commission's attempt to extend Section 224 inside buildings. Such rights as utilities typically have are very narrow. They have to be, because they are not intended to allow utilities unlimited access to any part of the building. They are intended only to allow the utility to occupy those portions of the building that it must occupy to deliver its service, and no more. Even if a particular grant gives the utility fairly wide discretion, that grant carries with it the presumption that the discretion will be used reasonably and only for the specified purposes. The right to install facilities in a building does not carry with it the right to go anywhere or run multiple sets of wires helter-skelter.

C. An Expansive Definition of "Right-of-Way" Would Eviscerate the Cable Inside Wiring Rules.

The fundamental purpose of the cable inside wiring rules is to limit the ability of incumbent cable operators to use their incumbency and market power to force MDU owners to sign unfavorable agreements. The rules strike a delicate balance between promoting competition in the delivery of video services in MDUs and protecting the rights of incumbent providers under the Constitution and state law. Consequently, the rules do not apply if a provider has "a legally enforceable right to remain" in a building. 47 C.F.R. § 76.804.

Any federal rule that would allow a video programming provider to install its facilities anywhere in a building over the objections of the building owner would circumvent the inside wiring rule. In fact, the Commission may already have done so in at least some cases; expanding the definition of "right-of-way" to allow a provider access throughout a building would merely make things worse. By interpreting Section 224 to extend inside buildings, the Commission

appears to have given every cable operator a "legally enforceable right to remain" in any building in which it already has facilities, if those facilities are located within the defined space occupied by an incumbent utility. If a building owner seeks to exercise its rights under §76.804, the provider can simply counter by asserting that Section 224 now gives it a right to remain on the premises.

In actuality, we believe that such rights would only exist in a small minority of cases.

Unless a property owner has conveyed an easement to a utility that is defined in a way that permits access to the building from the public right-of-way, and permits entities other than the utility to use the easement, we believe that a property owner retains the right to bar a telecommunications provider from entering the building without first agreeing to the terms of an access agreement. We also believe that, unless expressly forbidden by the terms of an easement or access agreement, owners can direct utilities to remove or relocate their facilities. On the other hand, if a utility's access rights take the form of a license, which is the most common form of access right, a utility will not own or control anything inside a building. Consequently, in most cases, we do not believe that telecommunications providers or cable operators will be able to rely on the Commission's new interpretation. Nevertheless, in those cases in which an easement clearly permits access to the property from the outside and permits third parties to occupy the easement, it appears that the cable inside wiring rules will not apply.

V. THE FCC SHOULD CONTINUE TO EXEMPT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS FROM ITS PROHIBITION ON EXCLUSIVE CONTRACTS.

As the Commission is well aware, the most intractable problem presented by the telecommunications market is the delivery of competitive local exchange service at the residential level. The high cost of network construction combined with the presence of an

entrenched competitor makes facilities-based competition extremely difficult to achieve.

Developing competition at the residential level is particularly difficult because of the high unit cost of delivering the service: on average, residential subscriber density is lower than that of business subscribers, and the revenue per residential customer is far lower. This is a fairly simple analysis to perform, and we presume the Commission has more than enough data to confirm it.

As noted in the FNPRM, at ¶¶ 32-33, we have provided the Commission with an analysis of the revenue potential of residential buildings compared to office buildings, which we reproduce here:

Annual revenue from providing video service in an average-sized apartment building:

- 30 units x \$50 per month per unit (\$600 per year) = \$18,000Annual revenue from providing video service in a median-sized apartment building:
- 150 units x \$50 per month per unit (\$600 per year) = \$90,000

 Annual revenue from providing telecommunications service in an average-sized office building:
- 20 tenants x \$1000 per month per tenant (\$12,000 per year) = \$240,000Annual revenue from providing telecommunications service in a median-sized office building:
 - 30 tenants x \$1000 per month per tenant (\$12,000 per year) = \$360,000

Therefore, an average-sized office building can yield over 13 times as much revenue as an average-sized apartment building. When comparing a median-sized office building to a median-sized apartment building, the office building yields four times as much revenue.¹⁰³ The

¹⁰³ The above analysis is based on the following assumptions:

- According to the BOMA Critical Connections survey, the average number of tenants in office buildings is 22. We have used 20 to simplify the arithmetic and provide a slightly more conservative figure. The median number of tenants in the buildings covered by the BOMA survey was between 20 and 40, so we have assumed that the median number of tenants in a building is 30.
- The number of units in apartment buildings varies greatly, but according to Census Bureau data available on the National Multi Housing Council's Web site, there are about 15,029,100 apartment units in 518,820 apartment buildings with five or more rental units. This is an average of 29 units per building. In the first example, we have rounded to 30 units both to simplify the arithmetic and to provide a slightly more conservative figure. The second example, using 150 units, represents the roughly 46% of apartment buildings that have between 50 and 300 units. On that basis, we have assumed that the median number of units in an apartment building is 150.
- According to the FCC's 1999 Annual Cable Television Competition Report, average cable revenue per subscriber is \$44. We have rounded this figure to \$50 for the same reasons as above.
- We do not have an accurate figure for the average amount paid by office building tenants for telecommunications services. For purposes of this comparison, we have used \$1000 per month, which we believe is a conservative estimate. The estimate was calculated by dividing an estimate of total revenues received by telecommunications providers from business subscribers by an estimate of the number of office tenants in the country. The \$1000 figure is only an approximation, but we think it provides a rough basis for comparison. We presume that the Commission could obtain such information from carriers.

According to the Census Bureau's 1992 Economic Census, there are 5,829,983 business establishments in the country. Note that this figure is likely to be considerably higher than the number of office tenants because many businesses, especially smaller ones, will not rent space in office buildings. Therefore, to estimate the number of actual office tenants, we subtracted the number of business establishments that had no employees (411,549) or only 1 to 4 employees (2,330,762), which resulted in 3,087,671. We rounded that number to 3.1 million.

To determine total telecommunications revenues received from office tenants, we started with the Census Bureau's estimate of local, long distance and network access revenue for 1998. The Census Bureau reports \$30.3 billion in nonresidential local service revenues, \$60.0 billion in long-distance revenues, and \$31.7 billion in network access revenues, for a total of \$122 billion. We ignored long distance revenues, and assumed that all network access revenues were ultimately paid by telephone subscribers and received by local exchange carriers, so that nonresidential subscribers paid LECs approximately \$62 billion for telecommunications services in 1998. We then reduced that figure by 30% to account for revenue from owner-

FNPRM notes that we applied the same reasoning to telecommunications without providing additional data. While this is correct, the initial analysis still proves the point with respect to telecommunications competition, because the numbers do not change much. The fact is that the average residential telephone subscriber does not pay much more per month for local telephone service than he does for cable television. Even if one doubles the \$50 per month figure used above, the revenue in an average-sized building is only \$36,000 per year, and the revenue for a median-sized building is \$180,000. This narrows the gap somewhat, but it is still substantial. Furthermore, we believe our assumptions regarding business revenues were quite conservative, so the gap is very likely wider than in our example. It should be relatively simple for the Commission to obtain the necessary figures from carriers. ¹⁰⁴

Accordingly, we think it is fairly simple to establish that the market for residential telecommunications services, even in MDUs, is substantially different than that for business services. The Commission should not regulate exclusive contracts for telecommunications service in residential buildings for the same reasons it has not regulated exclusive contracts for cable service: the only way to encourage competition in the residential market is by allowing small providers to develop a toehold.¹⁰⁵ If they are permitted to serve MDUs on an exclusive

occupants and other subscribers who do not rent space in office buildings. The resulting figure of \$43 billion was then divided by 3.1 million office tenants for an average of \$13,870 per year or \$1156 per month, which we rounded down to \$1000 to provide a conservative figure. If long distance revenues are included, using the same method yields an average of \$2400 per month.

Note that we have assumed 100% penetration rates for both types of service, which exaggerates total cable service revenues by about one-third, based on historical experience.

¹⁰⁴ The CLEC Report states that businesses spend about \$1,500 per month on broadband services, while residences spend \$50. CLEC Report ch. 3 at 19. This supports our analysis.

¹⁰⁵ See also Lansdale Declaration at ¶ 13; Ansel Declaration at ¶¶ 5, 6.

basis, they can be assured of sufficient cash flow to justify an initial investment. Over time, they may be able to expand outside the MDU market. Banning exclusive contracts, however, will expose small competitors to the certain threat of intrusions and anti-competitive actions by the incumbents. ¹⁰⁶

Finally, as discussed above, we do not believe that the Commission has the power to regulate agreements for building access because they are not agreements for the provision of telecommunications service. The Alliance supported and continues to support the Commission's ban on exclusive contracts in commercial buildings because such contracts do not serve the needs of commercial tenants and are rare. Nevertheless, the Commission's authority to adopt the ban is by no means clear. For this reason alone, the Commission should refuse to extend the ban to residential buildings.

VI. THE FCC SHOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH EXISTING EXCLUSIVE CONTRACTS IN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS.

Once again, the Commission's authority to ban prospective exclusive contracts is questionable. It therefore follows that the Commission's authority to abrogate existing contracts is at least as questionable. Furthermore, there is no evidence that exclusive contracts present a significant barrier to competition in commercial buildings. The FNPRM cites no statistics or other quantitative evidence regarding the number or prevalence of exclusive contracts in

¹⁰⁶ Of course, incumbents can negotiate exclusive contracts as well. As far as we are aware, however, it is relatively rare for an ILEC to enter into any kind of agreement with an MDU owner, much less an exclusive one. Furthermore, a new entrant is unlikely to choose to enter a building that is already served by an incumbent, except in unusual circumstances, so the option is of much more benefit to the competitor than it is to the incumbent. The challenge for residential CLECs will be to show that they offer better service, lower prices, or additional features that differentiate them from the incumbent, and a sheltered environment is the best place for them to start.

commercial buildings. Indeed, the FNPRM does not even refer to any anecdotes referring to such contracts. We believe that the record in this stage of the proceeding will be equally thin.

In addition, as existing contracts expire, they will necessarily be replaced by nonexclusive contracts under the Commission's ban. We believe that there are few long-term exclusive contracts in force. Consequently, the Commission has no reasonable basis for abrogating existing contracts.

VII. THE COMMISSION CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT REGULATE PREFERENTIAL MARKETING AGREEMENTS AND SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS.

Marketing agreements are exactly what they are called: Agreements under which building owners provide telecommunications carriers with marketing services. The Commission's authority to regulate such arrangements is as tenuous as its authority over exclusive contracts.

In any case, the Commission's goals are actually better advanced by not regulating such arrangements.

In a typical marketing agreement, a building owner agrees to provide one or more special services to the provider. These may range from merely handing new tenants applications for service or advertising fliers, to actively soliciting tenants, demonstrating the capabilities of a provider's service, distributing literature throughout the property, providing advertising space in a building newsletter, holding events in the building lobby, and many other activities that serve to enhance the reputation and market share of the provider. The benefit to the provider, particularly the unknown competitor, is obvious: the building staff essentially serves as an

 $^{^{107}}$ Bitz Declaration at ¶ 13. Ansel Declaration at ¶ 7-8; Lansdale Declaration at ¶ 15.

extension of the provider's marketing staff. One benefit to the building owner is a marketing fee, which may be rolled into the fee for building access. Another benefit is a closer relationship with the provider, in case there are service problems. But there is risk for the owner as well: the more aggressively the owner markets the provider's service, the more closely the provider and the owner will be linked. If the provider proves unreliable, this will immediately harm the owner's relations with its tenants. The owner will be expected to correct the problem, and will face the consequences of tenant dissatisfaction if it does not. 108

Such agreements also benefit tenants. Because the owner has a greater stake in the provider's reputation, the owner is more likely to consider the provider's reliability and service quality before entering into the agreement, and more likely to monitor the provider's performance.

VIII. THE FCC SHOULD WELCOME BLEC'S AS ANOTHER MECHANISM FOR DELIVERING SERVICES AND PROMOTING COMPETITION.

The FNPRM asks for comment on several issues related to "building LECs" or "BLECs." Although some prominent real estate firms have invested in such companies, the Alliance was formed to preserve the ability of building owners to control access to their property. In addition, we believe that the BLEC industry is in a better position to answer the Commission's questions regarding the types of services they provide and the nature of their relationships with building owners.

Having said that, however, we also believe that the Commission should welcome the participation of the BLECs in the telecommunications marketplace. Property owners invested in BLECs in the first place because they had concluded that the more traditional CLECs were not

¹⁰⁸ Ansel Declaration at ¶ 10.

responsive enough to the needs of building owners and their tenants. Rather than emphasizing the construction of facilities in the public rights-of-way, BLECs concentrate on installing networks within buildings, and providing a range of advanced services, including non-telecommunications services, to tenants. This represents a very different business model from that of the CLEC industry. Given recently expressed concerns over the financial health of the CLEC industry, the BLEC approach may well prove to complement the CLEC strategy in ways that advance the Commission's overall policy goals even more than the traditional CLECs. We also note that only a handful of property owners have invested in BLECs, and that BLECs have agreements to serve only a relatively small number of buildings. Accordingly, we urge the Commission to refrain from imposing special regulations on the BLECs.

That is not to say, however, that the BLEC's should not be subject to all the regulations applicable to them by virtue of their status as carriers. Unlike property owners, BLECs themselves would appear to be subject to the Commission's jurisdiction, at least with respect to their provision of telecommunications services. Consequently, we presume that the BLECs have the benefit and burden of all Commission regulations that apply to other CLECs.

¹⁰⁹ New Paradigm Resources Group, The BLEC Report (1st ed. 2001) at 1-2, 1-3.

¹¹⁰ See, e.g., Telecommunications Reports at 9, 23 (Dec. 18, 2000).

Conclusion

We respect the Commission's continuing commitment to promoting local competition in every sector of the market. We hope that the Commission will respect the real estate industry's commitment to serving its customers. Allowing the Alliance's guidelines and model documents the opportunity to set a standard and permitting the free market to continue to work will achieve far more than regulation could. Although we maintain as strongly as ever that the Commission has no power to interfere in relations between building owners and telecommunications providers, the Alliance will continue to work with the Commission and the telecommunications industry to develop mutually agreeable approaches to the issues that concern the Commission. The Commission, however, must respect the limits of its jurisdiction and the Constitution.

Respectfully submitted,

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List of Exhibits

Exhibit A	Members of the Real Access Alliance
Exhibit B	Declaration of Brent W. Bitz
Exhibit C	Declaration of Robert E. Burke
Exhibit D	Declaration of Scott Skokan
Exhibit E	Declaration of Lyn Lansdale
Exhibit F	Declaration of Susan Ansel
Exhibit G	Model License Agreement
Exhibit H	Cooper, Carvin Constitutional Analysis
Exhibit I	Cable Services Bureau: Average Time Taken to Resolve Cable Regulation Proceedings in 2000
Exhibit J	CUB to Challenge Long Distance Rules, Chicago Tribune, May 27, 1986, at C5
Exhibit K	Jonathan Weber, Long-Distance Client 'Theft' Common, Los Angeles Times, Aug. 20, 1989, at D5

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